February 1-February 15, 2010

#### **EDUCATION**

International School of Kabul Students Model Community Service: In a country with limited understanding and resources for children with special needs, the students of the USAID-funded International School of Kabul (ISK) recently made a difference for children with cerebral palsy. ISK students launched a campus-wide clothing drive with the aim to help others and better their community. All of the international school's classes participated by collecting donated clothing for the Streams Project, a program that works with families of children with cerebral palsy in Taloqan, Takhar. ISK students collected 100 bags of clothing and then held a movie fundraiser to purchase basic toiletries and food.



A mother of a child with cerebral palsy receives clothing collected by International School of Kabul students.

PHOTO: USAID/ISK

Each school year, ISK student council members and students undertake community service projects, demonstrating a commitment to Afghanistan's future. In past years, they have planted trees, volunteered at a local hospital, and organized canned food drives. Through community service, students are improving the lives of their fellow Afghans and discovering how they can have a positive impact on the world around them.



A group of journalists from Ghor province attend a workshop at Nai's Kabul training center, with assistance from the Ghor PRT. PHOTO: USAID/Internews

### **DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE**

#### **Strengthening Independent Media in Afghanistan:**

Afghan journalists and media producers now have more access to training opportunities through U.S. Government support to Nai, an Afghan media training organization. In addition to its offices in Kabul, Nai has opened two new media training hubs in Mazari Sharif and Jalalabad. Two more training hubs are planned for Hirat and Kandahar and will open later in the year.

The initial training sessions offered include a course in community development, which is supported by a USAID grant. Reporters are learning how to network with and engage their communities to develop high-quality localized programming that builds audiences

and listenership. Not only does this improve the business model of the stations, it creates the kind of community dialog and interaction that can serve as a stabilizing influence. Other training is available on a fee basis. Topics include basic journalism, radio production, media law, field reporting for television, and safety training.

February 1-February 15, 2010

The goal of expanded media training is to provide Afghans with greater access to quality news and information. The successful growth of independent media businesses in Afghanistan is providing jobs as well as supporting the free exchange of ideas needed in a democratic society.

#### **District Council Connects Citizens with Government:**

Afghan-led, community-oriented development is essential to building a well-governed, democratic country that meets the needs of its citizens. The U.S. Government and the Afghan Independent Directorate of Local Governance are helping Afghans take ownership of their own local governance and development priorities through the creation of community councils. These councils, formed by district-wide jirgas, serve as an incubator for eventual elected councils and give the public a greater connection with government.

On February 2, a group of six USAID and State Department representatives travelled to Mohammad Agha district of Logar province to meet with a newly established District Council. The Mohammad Agha District Council members discussed some of their early work, including the development of three committees to look at security, development, and justice. The council has already begun to reach out to insurgents in the



Council members present their programs.
PHOTO: USAID/ASOP

area to reduce conflict. The council's three women voiced several requests for women in the district. Overall, the council will improve community coordination and communication with the Afghan government, ensuring more stability and representation at the local level.



A Wardak villager demonstrates the use of a water divider that was build with the support of USAID.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

#### PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

Wardak Residents Take Control of Their Own Development: In the village of Qala-e-Sofian, in Wardak province, the U.S. Government helped local residents build 46 water dividers along the primary canal. The dividers provide regulated water access to off-shoot fields and prevent overflow or uneven water distribution. As a result, this project established more equitable water distribution and removed one of the primary sources of instability in the village – water disputes. The project was funded by a USAID community stabilization grant implemented by the community members themselves, and it employed 16 laborers for approximately 20 days.

February 1-February 15, 2010

**Distributing Teaching Kits and Science Lab Equipment:** Ensuring that Afghan students receive a good education is a priority for the U.S. and Afghan Governments. In early February, USAID provided the Khost Director of Education with practical teaching kits and science lab equipment, which will benefit 50 schools in five districts of Khost province. The supplies, which were purchased with support from the USAID Local Governance and Community Development program, will reach approximately 10,000 secondary school students and 7,600 primary school pupils. The improved learning environment, along with the education director's role in bringing it about, is a key step toward improving education and



The acting governor of Khost presents science equipment to local schools. PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

boosting citizen confidence in government-provided services.



Customers admire Afghan carpets at Domotex 2010 in Hannover, Germany. PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

### **ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Extraordinary Success for Afghan Traders at Domotex Carpet Trade Show: For the third year in a row, Afghan carpet makers and dealers showcased their country's best hand-made carpets at Domotex, the world's premier trade show for carpets and floor coverings, held annually in Hannover, Germany. With financial and logistical support from USAID, Afghanistan's carpet sellers enjoyed their most successful trade event ever, recording \$12,116,500 in sales, a 400 percent increase over 2009 sales.

Buyer interest at Domotex demonstrated that Afghanistan's carpets are held in high esteem by the international market. The fair reported a record

number of visitors, and nearly 90 percent of the entire inventory of the Afghanistan pavilion sold in deals made with buyers from Europe and the USA. Afghan carpets also achieved industry recognition, with Nomad Ltd./Chak Palu winning the award for Standard Modern Carpet Design.

International trade fairs like Domotex not only generate significant sales and contracts for Afghan traders, but also offer participants the opportunity to learn about international business practices and raise the visibility of Afghan products in the international marketplace. The successful performance at Domotex 2010 is largely due to the experience that Afghan traders gained by participating in similar events over the past few years.

February 1-February 15, 2010



AWBF members display their products at the annual Opportunities for Women Business Conference in Jalalabad.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

Afghan Women's Business Federation Builds
Opportunities for Women in the East: The role of
women in Afghanistan's economic development is
expanding greatly. On January 16, the Afghan
Women's Business Federation (AWBF) in Jalalabad
held its annual Opportunities for Women Business
Conference. Ninety AWBF members from eastern
Afghanistan and several key members of the local
government attended the event. In addition to
providing information about local business
opportunities, the conference provided a platform for
participants to present business proposals to
international donor agencies. During the event, the
Nangarhar Deputy Governor promised to reserve

space for AWBF in the new industrial park, and the Director of Women's Affairs promised that all future government-funded training on women's business issues would be implemented through AWBF. The event closed with an exhibition showcasing products from several AWBF members.

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